

**STATE OF MONTANA
OFFICE OF THE STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER
STRATEGIC PLAN**

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS

GOAL 1: Establish a statewide public defender system to provide effective assistance of counsel to indigent criminal defendants and other persons in civil cases who are entitled by law to assistance of counsel at public expense.

GOAL 2: Ensure that the system is free from undue political interference and conflicts of interest.

GOAL 3: Provide that the public defender services are delivered by qualified and competent counsel in a manner that is fair and consistent throughout the state.

GOAL 4: Establish a system that utilizes state employees, contracted services, or other methods of providing services in a manner that is responsive to and respective of regional and community needs and interests.

GOAL 5: Ensure that adequate public defender funding of the statewide public defender system is provided and managed in a fiscally responsible manner.

GOAL 1: Establish a statewide public defender system to provide effective assistance of counsel to indigent criminal defendants and other persons in civil cases who are entitled by law to assistance of counsel at public expense.

OBJECTIVE: Design, develop, and implement an integrated public defender system that provides high quality services at a reasonable cost.

ACTION ITEM: Find out how services are currently being provided within the state by all sources that include county and city employees and by contracted and appointed attorneys. Visit with judges, county and city offices, appointed attorneys, and other interested parties.

ACTION ITEM: Design an integrated system to provide high quality public defender services at a reasonable cost by striking a balance of state employees and contract services to achieve the best result.

ACTION ITEM: Provide a plan for providing public defender services to the Public Defender Commission and other interested parties.

ACTION ITEM: Implement the plan.

GOAL 2: Ensure that the system is free from undue political interference and conflicts of interest.

OBJECTIVE: Assist the criminal justice system to treat people without bias and to provide fair treatment to all.

ACTION ITEM: Develop and implement a uniform procedure for identifying conflicts of interest.

ACTION ITEM: Identify attorneys who are available to handle conflict cases.

GOAL 3: Provide that the public defender services are delivered by qualified and competent counsel in a manner that is fair and consistent throughout the state.

OBJECTIVE: Design, develop, and implement a state of the art public defender training function.

ACTION ITEM: Hire a training coordinator to manage the function.

ACTION ITEM: The training coordinator, in consultation with the Chief Public Defender and the Public Defender Commission, will design a training program.

ACTION ITEM: The training coordinator will develop and implement this program and provide training to all members of the system including state employees and contact service providers.

ACTION ITEM: The training coordinator will develop and implement specialized training for attorneys representing those with physical or mental disabilities.

GOAL 4: Establish a system that utilizes state employees, contracted services, or other methods of providing services in a manner that is responsive to and respective of regional and community needs and interests.

OBJECTIVE: Assure that the main focus of the Office of the State Public Defender is to provide the best client service. Assure that the best service is being provided by monitoring the performance of state employees and contracts with private attorneys.

ACTION ITEM: Establish a central office that will manage the system and other centralized activities, establish each region that will manage regional activities, establish local public defender offices, and establish contracts for public defender services.

ACTION ITEM: Hire new state employees and transfer county employees to state service to staff the central, regional, and local public defender offices.

ACTION ITEM: Identify those attorneys willing to contract for public defender services and enter into contracts for public defender services. Implement a case and time reporting system to monitor contract services.

GOAL 5: Ensure that adequate public defender funding of the statewide public defender system is provided and managed in a fiscally responsible manner.

OBJECTIVE: Communicate to the Public Defender Commission, all branches of state government, and other interested parties information related to the caseload and case cost managed by the public defender system.

ACTION ITEM: Hire financial and information technology managers and other employees to manage systems and report on case and cost activity.

ACTION ITEM: Develop and install systems that provide information necessary to manage the public defender system and inform others about the case and cost activity within the system.

ACTION ITEM: Capture data and report information as required by Senate Bill 146 and for the effective management of the system.

ACTION ITEM: Hire a Contract Officer and other employees as needed to provide for the effective management of contracts with individuals that provide services to the system. Services include: public defender services provided by private attorneys, expert witness services, evaluations, and medical services.

ACTION ITEM: Develop performance evaluation and monitoring methods to assure that services provided by contract sources are both effective and efficient and provided without duplication.